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THE YEAR IN MUSIC

2017 is done. What's next?



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WHAT IS YOUR ESTABLISHMENT KNOWN FOR: *2-4-1's, best prices in town.*

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BARTENDER
OF THE WEEK
←

Jeremiah



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December 13-19, 2017
VOLUME 37 | NUMBER 1932



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THE YEAR IN MUSIC

Reflecting on the all the music news of 2017—
and wondering what comes next.

By Keith Harris

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CROSSWORD

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Adam DeGross.
Pictured: the Triple
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CITY PAGES ONLINE www.citypages.com
OFFICE HOURS Monday-Friday
8:30 am to 5:30 pm

ISSN 0744-0456. City Pages is published weekly
by Star Tribune Media Company, LLC. City Pages
is located at 800 1st St. N., Ste. 300, Minneapolis,
MN 55401. City Pages is available free of charge,
limited to one copy per reader. Additional copies
of the current issue may be purchased at the
City Pages office for \$1, payable in advance.
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PINK

★ MARCH 23 ★

LORDE

★ APRIL 5 & 7 ★

2018 NCAA MEN'S FROZEN FOUR

★ MAY 6 ★

STARS ON ICE

★ MAY 15 ★

SHANIA TWAIN

★ JULY 1 ★

HARRY STYLES

★ AUGUST 14 ★

SAM SMITH

★ SEPTEMBER 18 ★

MAROON 5

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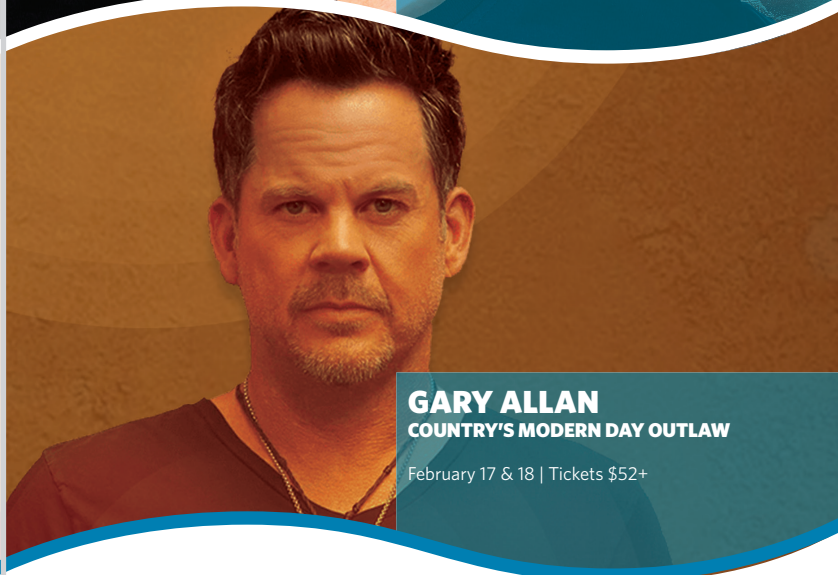
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THE SHORTLIST



Trump fans cheer
Lindsey Vonn's injury
At citypages.com

GIOVANNI AULETTA, ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE STAT SHEET

\$188 million

Minnesota's projected deficit this year after a Republican tax cut. The state had a \$1.4 billion surplus at this time last year.

29%

Approval rating for the GOP congressional tax cut plan, which will add \$1.5 trillion to the federal debt, but will make CEOs really happy.

59

Percentage of Minnesotans who believe they're getting good value for their taxes.

51

Percentage of Republicans who still believe President Obama was born in Kenya.

SIN CITY LIGHT

DESPITE COPIOUS hand-wringing, Minneapolis' crime rate remains so dainty we automatically qualify for French citizenship.

A study by the Major Cities Chiefs Association found that, for the 12-month period ending in June, Minneapolis couldn't crack the Top 60 most deadliest cities, taking a back seat to such luminaries of mayhem as Mesa, Arizona; Aurora, Colorado; and Omaha, Nebraska.

St. Paul wasn't included in the study. Everybody always forgets St. Paul. And as a general rule, St. Paul is quite pleased to keep it that way.

"That deer needs to be tracked down, given a blood test, and held pending the results."

Reader Steve Frederick responds to "Badass Anoka County deer hit by car, flips, hit again, gets up, leaves [Video]," at citypages.com."

POPULAR STORIES

AT CITYPAGES.COM

UP-DOWN calls alt-right presence a 'terrible incident' that won't happen again

Modist releases **'DILLY DILLY'**
DOUBLE IPA, is immediately hit with hilarious cease and desist from Anheuser-Busch

Citing 'exhaustion,' **YELAWOLF** bailed on sold-out Minneapolis concert after one song

Holy shit, **UNITED NOODLES** found a big-ass lizard hiding in their produce pallets

NEW BRIGHTON COUNCIL MEETING turns into 'white privilege' catfight

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

Ex-Viking QB sued (again) for sexual harassment

Warren Moon's three years with the Minnesota Vikings were, professionally, pretty good. Personally, they were a disaster. In 1994, Moon was sued by a Vikings cheerleader, who claimed the Pro Bowl quarterback had offered her money for sex and hit on her at the bar where she worked. Moon said the claims were untrue, but settled the lawsuit out of court.

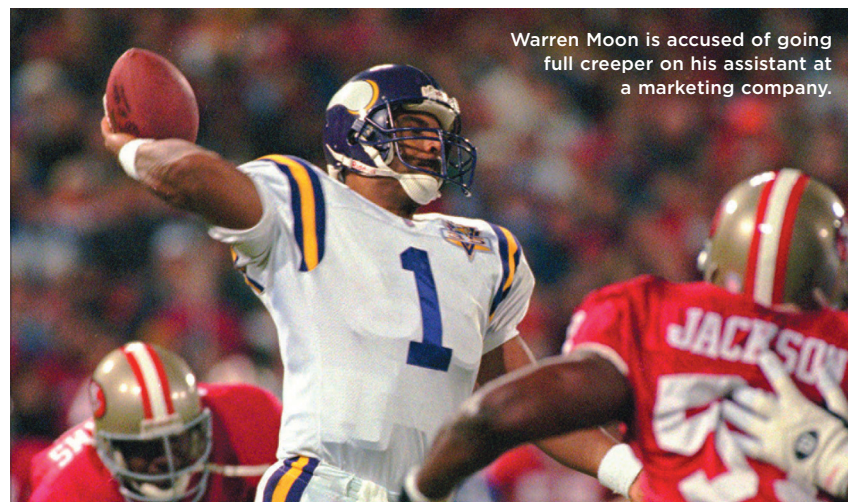
The following year, while still with the Vikings, Moon was arrested for a domestic abuse incident that occurred at his home in Texas. Moon was accused of slapping and choking his wife, then pursuing her in a car chase when she fled their home. A criminal prosecution fell apart when his wife took the blame for the incident; they later divorced.

Moon's unseemly mid-'90s period was

back in the news last week. A woman who worked for a sports marketing firm Moon owns accused him of repeated unwanted sexual advances. According to a lawsuit filed in California, the treatment was chalked up as just part of the experience of working for Warren Moon, who allegedly told her that his previous assistant at 1 Sports Marketing had "accepted the same arrangement."

That arrangement? Sleeping in the same bed as Moon on business trips, while wearing thong underwear at his request, as well as showering with the door open and allowing Moon to come and go from the bathroom while she was nude.

Wendy Haskell, 32, also says Moon, 61, grabbed her crotch during one work trip and pulled off her bathing suit top during another. She further accuses Moon



Warren Moon is accused of going full creeper on his assistant at a marketing company.

GEORGE NIKITIN, ASSOCIATE PRESS

of slipping a drug into her drink during a trip to Mexico.

The string of alleged events all happened since last summer, when Haskell was given the job of executive assistant to Moon. When Haskell complained of her treatment to the company's CEO, she says she was demoted.

An attorney for Haskell told the Washington Post the incidents were not reported

to police because Haskell was "scared," adding: "She had no idea that her job duties were going to involve that kind of perverse protocol."

After the news broke, the Seattle Seahawks announced that Moon would take a leave of absence from his job as a radio announcer on the team's games.

Moon has yet to address the lawsuit publicly. —MIKE MULLEN

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Eighth Circuit of Hell

Despite the spotlight on sexual harassment, a high court turns a blind eye



Mike Mullen

Erin Maye Quade used to watch her mother get ready for work. Mom dressed up nicely for her job as a Wells Fargo vice president. The last thing she did every morning was pin one ear down with Scotch tape.

It hid the damage done at an office Christmas party, when, May Quade's mom said, a drunken male colleague traipsed around the room, grabbing and kissing women. Maye Quade's mom refused him and turned her head. In their struggle, her earring ripped through her lobe.

"At that time, that was just some drunk guy being an A-hole," says Rep. Maye Quade (DFL-Apple Valley), who last month came forward to say she'd been harassed by two fellow lawmakers. "Things are changing now. Things have changed even in the last couple years."

Not all those changes are good. The cultural wheel has turned, shedding from its spokes such luminaries as Kevin Spacey, Matt Lauer, and Garrison Keillor. Both lawmakers who Maye Quade accused of harassment resigned.

But most perpetrators aren't famous, and their names don't make for explosive headlines. Their victims are supposed to have their day in court. The wheel is turning there, too—in reverse.

In 2014, Denise Blomker was fired from her job as secretary in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Bloomington office. The official letter said Blomker was being terminated for calling a supervisor a "god-damned fucking liar" and grabbing his arm.

In a lawsuit alleging a "hostile work environment," Blomker had a different story to tell: She'd suffered through years

of sexual harassment by two co-workers. According to the lawsuit, one day, a man came walking toward her with a "smirk on his face" and stood "extremely close." When Blomker looked down, she realized he had an erection.

After another incident when she felt the man had violated her space, Blomker complained to supervisors, loudly: "What does that man have to do, rape me before anyone does anything?" She was "written up," according to her lawsuit.

In the same lawsuit, Blomker would accuse a second man of deliberately spreading his legs wide and picking at the seam "in the crotch of his pants" while they spoke. She also accused him of carrying on a conversation while he had a visible erection.

Did these things really happen, as Blomker says? We'll never know. In the agency's defense, the U.S. District Attorney's Office argued that even if the claims were true, her treatment was not "severe and pervasive" and was not "objectively offensive." A judge agreed—the men's behavior was "vile and inappropriate," maybe, but not "actionable harassment"—and dismissed it.

Blomker appealed to the Eighth Circuit Court. Last year, a three-judge panel threw her case out in a 2-1 decision, observing at one point that "none of [Blomker's] alleged incidents involved actual touching." A guy with a hard-on was no big deal.

The ruling cited previous Eighth Circuit findings 20 different times. Among them: a case where a man called a co-worker frequently at home and left romance novels in her office mailbox. One where a man said a woman would "advance profession-

ally" if she got him off. And one where a man called a woman "baby doll" and told her over the phone "she should be in bed with him." None of these were considered harassment. Why would Blomker's experiences be?

This is not the court Jean Boler remembers. She was a lawyer on *Jenson v. Eveleth Taconite Company*, a class-action case where more than a dozen women sued their employer for near-constant sexual harassment in the late 1980s and early 1990s. (Their story was later told in numerous books and the movie *North Country*.) The atmosphere at the mine was chauvinist to its core. Porn hung from the walls, and men routinely propositioned or taunted female co-workers. Some treated the women's bodies as theirs to touch whenever the urge struck.

In a 1996 ruling, a retired Minnesota judge granted the victims amounts between \$2,500 and \$25,000. They appealed to the Eighth Circuit, which threw out the paltry awards and sent the case to a jury. "Money cannot make these women whole," the court wrote, but victory could teach businesses that "such hostility will not be tolerated."

The mining company ducked a jury trial, instead settling for a combined \$3.5 million.

Two decades later, Boler would be less confident about bringing such a suit. "I have wondered what would have happened to the *Jenson* women in this climate," Boler says. "It is questionable that they would've been successful."

What happened? Elections. Of nine judges currently on the Eighth Circuit,

eight of them, all men, were appointed by Republican presidents. A ninth, Minnesota Supreme Court Justice David Stras, will soon join them. Federal appeals court judges are appointed for life.

"Things have really swung the other way, with judges now extremely skeptical of employees' claims against the employer," says Boler. "It's a warning... that society is way ahead of the court on these issues right now. It reminds me of gay rights, and marriage equality, where the courts had to come along with society."

Or be instructed to. By creating a stronger, clearer, federal anti-discrimination employment law, Congress could help. But it won't.

Erin Maye Quade wants to turn unwanted attention into momentum. She thinks now is the time for Minnesota to address sexual harassment. It could start by rewriting the Minnesota Human Rights Act, where judges somehow think a ban on "intimidating, hostile, or offensive" behavior still allows a guy and his erection to march right over to the next cubicle.

When her bill gets a hearing, the line to testify might run out the door. 

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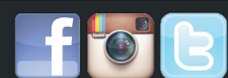
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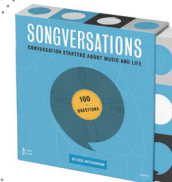


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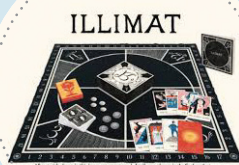
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THE YEAR IN MUSIC

2017 is done. What's next?

Dillinger Four play
the last night of
the Triple Rock

ADAM DEGROSS

BY KEITH HARRIS

Ever try to list your top 10 albums for the year while the world is on fire?

The old cliché that music offers us refuge during dark times has gotten a real workout recently. And as 2017 peppered us with a rat-a-tat of crummy news you know too well for me to need to rehash here, nobody'd begrudge us that balm, whether it came from a pop hit that unexpectedly reduced you to tears during your morning commute or from shouting along a familiar chorus in the midst of a crowd at First Ave.

Music criticism, though, the nitpicky act of sorting the great from the good from the gunk? It gets little enough respect in the coziest of historical moments. If fiddling while Rome burns is irresponsible, critiquing the fiddler's performance is downright perverse.

So allow me to justify my existence (or at least my profession). Music isn't just about escape, isn't only the comfort food we turn to in panicky moments. It's also, to use a scary word, art—maybe even (gulp) Art. It offers examples of how to live in the world, and scrutinizing our tastes to determine what we value says a lot about who we are and what we want.

And this year, what I personally valued more than ever was directness. I heard it in the way Alabama native son Jason Isbell came to grips with his privilege singing "White Man's World" at St. Paul's Palace Theatre, the historic venue whose reopening was the most heartening local music news of the year. I heard it in the way Providence indie radicals Downtown Boys ridiculed our calamity-in-chief's racism with "A Wall" at Minneapolis' Triple Rock Social Club, whose closing was a real punch in the gut.

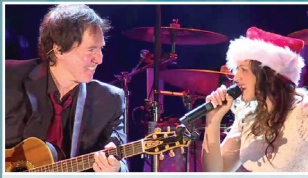
Oh, the Triple Rock. The demise of the punk-friendly Cedar Avenue venue, especially coming so soon after the death of Hüsker Dü's Grant Hart, made a grim year grimmer, and it contributed to a prevailing musical mood in town that was often even more retrospective than usual. We finally got a live Replacements album worth listening to, and a Hüsker Dü box set, and we fretted over the fate of Prince's vaults. There was vital contemporary music all around us still—locally and nationally—but the direction it was headed was anybody's guess.

Whether or not that future turns out to be female, like the T-shirt says, the present certainly is. If speaking the truth felt as though it had little impact in so many areas of public life this year, the effect of women facing down their abusers rejuvenated the promise of the suddenly all-too-relevant writer Mar-

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DECEMBER 14



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'Twas the Jam Before Christmas
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DECEMBER 19



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DECEMBER 20-23



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DECEMBER 25



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DECEMBER 27



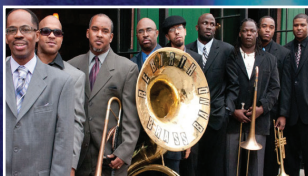
THE BODEANS
DECEMBER 28



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DECEMBER 31



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JANUARY 5-6



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JANUARY 11-12



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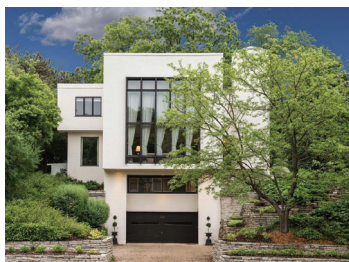
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Grant Hart



SHAWN BRACKBILL

garet Atwood that “a word after a word after a word is power.” Long before the unmasking of predatory males earned its own hashtag, an accusatory tone resonated throughout music, from Minnesota singer-songwriter Mary Bue’s unsparing recollection of sexual assault on her simmering “Petty Misdemeanor” to Keshia’s monumental power balled “Praying.”

Even songs from women that weren’t explicitly “political” felt like protests in the way they addressed men. Amber Coffman asked, “How is playing it safe working out for you?” on her open-hearted pop album *City of No Reply*. Katie Crutchfield warned, “Everyone will hear me complain” on Waxahatchee’s streamlined indie-rock record, *Out in the Storm*. Lorde murmured, “Bet you rue the day you kissed a writer in the dark” on her gloriously weird #1 album *Melodrama*. No sane man wanted to be on the receiving end of those lyrics.

In fact, it could be as hard to predict what music would feel culturally significant in 2017 as it was to guess what tomorrow’s breaking news might be. The heartfelt yet convoluted political ironies of Arcade Fire’s *Everything Now* felt as irrelevant as the expert yet petty celebrity head games of Taylor Swift’s *Reputation*. Listeners might not have been lashing out at white nationalism by replaying “Despacito,” but a Spanish-language song rising to the top of the charts felt like a symbolic victory regardless, just as the lyrics to Migos’ endlessly memeable hit “Bad and Boujee” seemed right at home when transformed into an anti-Trump slogan at a protest downtown last winter.

Similarly, stripper-turned-rap star Cardi B’s “Bodak Yellow” sounded like a battle cry when a crowd of women waiting for SZA to perform at First Avenue this summer chanted along to that surprise hit. That show was maybe the most celebratory I experienced this year. With her elongated sing-song and wiry guitar-pop, SZA is at the forefront of a crop of

African-American women—Syd, Kehlani, our own Lady Midnight—whose music is so varied that to lump them together as “R&B” feels reductive.

And there were reminders that white guys sometimes still have something to offer. If the wry lounge-pop of the genteel-voiced Swede Jens Lekman were any whiter it’d make you snow blind, but his *Life Will See You Now* rang out with a sense curiosity and pleasure in sharp contrast to the cruelty of the day, as did the crafty, country-tinged observations of local veteran singer-songwriter Dylan Hicks’ *Ad Out*.

If I seem overly focused on lyrics here, let me point out that my favorite album of 2017 has no words at all. Jlin is a Gary, Indiana steelworker who reworks the dense

The demise of the Triple Rock made a grim year grimmer.

Chicago electronic dance style known as footwork on *Black Origami*. These tracks felt as claustrophobic as your Twitter feed and offered no comfort or hidden escape routes, but in their rhythm and ingenuity was a sense of possibility, a suggestion of how to navigate the funhouse of current events we’re all trapped within.

Because let’s face it, the world is never not on fire—it’s just that the more comfortable among us only notice when the flames spread far enough to singe us. And when that happens, any song that can make you feel a smidgen less helpless is a necessity. But any song that challenges you is even better. Music isn’t going to change the world for us, after all. But it might help us imagine how we want it to change.

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A ROCK 'N' ROLL TIMELINE OF MINNESOTA MUSIC

JANUARY

United Properties reveals its initial plans for a **new music venue** near Target Field. Later in the year, we learn that concert booking behemoth Live Nation plans to operate the forthcoming 2,000-capacity space, which will be modeled after the historic Fillmore theater in San Francisco.

Semisonic drummer **Jacob Slichter** slips on some ice and fractures his wrist, causing the alt-rockers to postpone their planned reunion shows. The band goes on to perform their 1996 album *The Great Divide* in its entirety at the Turf Club and First Avenue in June, and will return to those venues to play all of 1998's *Feeling Strangely Fine* in December.

P.O.S releases *Chill, Dummy*, his first solo album since his 2014 kidney transplant. "So much of the lyrics are written at me, kind of freaking out about reconnecting with my friends and reconnecting with life after being sick," the rapper tells City Pages.

Tommy Stinson's band Bash & Pop, which reunited in 2016, returns to Minneapolis to play the Entry. Where does the now New York-based former Replacements bassist hang when he's in town? The Loon Café. "Their food's pretty decent," according to Tommy.

FEBRUARY

Houston rap wild man **Riff Raff** hangs up on City Pages when we ask him about the time he spent attending Hibbing Community College. "I cut him three weeks into the season," his former college basketball coach writes in our comments section. "Wasn't a fan of his basketball skills and definitely not a fan of his music."

Dave Simonett of Trampled by Turtles releases *Furnace*, under the name Dead Man Winter, with lyrics influenced by his recent divorce. "This was... almost like a vomit of lyrics that came out of that experience," he tells City Pages. "It still

makes me nervous, not having any kind of veil or a metaphor."

Ron Upton, a beloved member of the Twin Cities music community, dies at the age of 58. Upton was a door man at the Uptown Bar until it closed in 2009, and he later worked at Cause Spirits and Mortimer's.

A huge selection of **Prince's** albums, including his '80s classics, begins streaming on Spotify for the first time. Countless stingy millennials who have never been in a record store finally get to hear *Sign o' the Times*.

MARCH

Following an extensive rehab project, the **Palace Theatre** re-opens as a music venue in St. Paul, owned and operated by First Avenue. Atmosphere, the Jayhawks, and Phantogram play the first three shows on opening weekend.

Much-hyped young local pop-rockers **Hippo Campus** release their first full-length album, *Landmark*. "I feel like the new record is less bouncy compared to our older stuff, and probably different from what

Haley

people are expecting," singer and guitarist Nathan Stocker tells City Pages.

Haley Bonar makes the "very personal and joyful decision" to drop her surname and begin performing as simply "Haley," citing the crude jokes she endured and to shed patriarchal baggage. Sez Haley: "Let's face it folks, we all come from a vagina!"

Rock 'n' roll pioneer **Chuck Berry** dies at the age of 90. His final album, *Chuck*, released posthumously, ain't bad.

APRIL

Lil Wayne doesn't make it to his Target Center show; concertgoers don't learn that he's canceled until after all the opening acts have performed. This was Weezy's third Twin Cities cancellation in three years, and Go 95.3 boycotts the rapper's music in protest.

With owner Arnellia Allen confronting "major health issues," the St. Paul supper club **Arnellia's** closes after a 25-year run. The closing announcement describes Allen (accurately) as "the Black Joan Collins of a modern day *Dynasty*."

Bob Dylan releases a rap album and **Allen Kingdom** puts out another album of standards. Oh wait, we got that backward. Anyway, both Kingdom's *Lines* and Dylan's *Triplicate* are pretty snazzy collections.



P.O.S

CHAD KAMENSHINE



Chuck Berry

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Sonny Knight



TIM CAMPBELL, STAR TRIBUNE

A surprise—and, oops, illegal—**Prince EP** appears online, and is then almost immediately yanked from circulation. The tracks on *Deliverance* were recorded with engineer Ian Boxill, who finished and distributed them before the folks at Paisley Park got wise.

MAY

Treehouse Records owner Mark Trehus announces that the historic record store on the corner of 26th and Lyndale will close at the end of 2017. Formerly Oarjokefolkopus, the store was the epicenter of Minneapolis punk in the late '70s and early '80s.

Minneapolis singer and guitarist **Jesse Larson**, who gigs around town in the band MPLS, finishes in fourth place on the TV singing contest *The Voice*, a show that's featured a fair amount of Minnesota talent over the years.

A probate judge in Carver County officially announces who **Prince's heirs** are, but the settlement of the superstar's estate hits a snag when Universal demands to back out of a licensing deal for a chunk of Prince's catalog.

Rhymesayers present their 10th annual **Soundset** festival at the State Fairgrounds, with both national performers (including Lauryn Hill and Travis Scott) and plenty of local rap talent.

JUNE

Justin Vernon's third annual two-day **Eaux Claires** festival in Wisconsin is once more a success, despite a few downpours, with Chance the Rapper and Wilco headlining.

Stokely Williams, the lead singer of veteran Minneapolis R&B act Mint Condition, releases his first solo album, the excellent *Introducing Stokely*.

Purple Rain is remixed and reissued with bonus tracks—the first we get to hear of the music stashed away in Prince's storied vault. The re-released tracks sound better than ever; the newly released tracks are terrific too.

Revered Twin Cities soul man **Sonny Knight** dies of lung cancer at age 69. A longtime mainstay of the local music scene, Knight found acclaim late in life when he released his 2014 comeback album, *I'm Still Here*, on Secret Stash Records.

JULY

The new owners of the **Varsity Theater** announce that they will soon be hosting live music again. Sex abuse allegations against the Varsity's previous owner, Jason McLean, had all but shut down the Dinkytown venue.

KFAI shakes up its programming schedule. In the community radio station's biggest move, former Current and Go DJ Barb Abney is paired with young KFAI volunteer Miss Brit to host a morning show.

The summer concert season gets underway with **Guns N' Roses** rocking U.S. Bank Stadium and both Billy Joel and Florida Georgia Line filling Target Field—all in one weekend.

The **Minneapolis Armory**, best known as the site where the videos for Prince's "1999" and Aerosmith's "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing" were shot, announces that it will open as a massive music venue in time for New Year's Eve.

AUGUST

Justin Vernon announces a January 2018 music festival in Cancun called Days Have No Numbers, but almost immediately

cancels the affair amid fan complaints about the high ticket prices.

Minneapolis attorney Aaron Wayne Davis is placed on “administrative leave” by his firm when City Pages publicizes the fact that he runs the **neo-Nazi metal label** Behold Barbarity.

It’s a bad month for white supremacy all around. Jake Rudh pulls his Transmission dance party from **Club Jäger** after City Pages reveals that the bar’s owner contributed to David Duke’s Senate campaign.

Donna Grantis, the guitarist in Prince’s late-career band 3rdEyeGirl, premieres her new group—featuring local musicians Bryan Nichols, JT Bates, Cody McKinney, and Suphala—at the Dakota.

SEPTEMBER

Grant Hart dies at age 56 of complications from liver cancer and hepatitis C. As the drummer for Hüsker Dü and one of the group’s two principal songwriters, Hart helped put Twin Cities punk on the map in the ’80s.

U2 performs at U.S. Bank Stadium. It’s the third and final concert at the new football arena this year, following G N’ R in July and Coldplay in August. Justin Bieber, who was also scheduled for the Bank in 2017, canceled his tour.

The promising young St. Paul rapper **Poppy Loco** dies in Hennepin County Medical Center from gunshot wounds, one day after his 24th birthday.

Duluth folk musician **Charlie Parr** releases a new album, *Dog*, and opens up about his long struggle with depression and suicidal thoughts. “I want to live a life where I’m not ashamed,” Parr tells City Pages.

OCTOBER

Rumors that **Justin Timberlake** will headline the halftime show for Super Bowl LII at U.S. Bank Stadium in February 2018 turn out to be true. Timberlake last performed at the Super Bowl in 2004, where he played a part in the infamous “wardrobe malfunction” that would unfairly hobble Janet Jackson’s career.

Two essential new books about **Minnesota music history** are published: Andrea Swensson’s *Got to Be Something Here: The Rise of the Minneapolis Sound* and Chris Riemenschneider’s *First Avenue: Minnesota’s Mainroom*.

Rock ’n’ roll loses two of the greats. New Orleans piano man and ’50s hitmaker **Fats Domino** dies at the age of 89, and beloved heartland rocker **Tom Petty** dies at 66.

The Current hires local MC, educator, and activist **Toki Wright** to host a hip-hop show.

NOVEMBER

After 19 years, the **Triple Rock Social Club**, which had been integral in the development of the local punk, hip-hop, and metal scenes in the Twin Cities, closes for good. Club co-owner Erik Funk’s band Dillinger Four and Detroit hardcore legends Negative Approach play the final show on November 21.

Thomas Abban, a young (and mysterious) singer and guitarist who built local buzz throughout 2017, wins City Pages’ 27th annual Picked to Click poll.

Minneapolis and St. Paul both elect new mayors. Ahead of Election Day, City Pages asked the prominent candidates what one album they’d want to have if they were stranded a desert island. St. Paul mayor-elect **Melvin Carter III** chooses Earth, Wind & Fire’s *Greatest Hits* while Minneapolis’ next mayor, **Jacob Frey**, picks an audiobook, *How to Build a Boat*.

Chad Hanks, the bassist for Minneapolis nu-metal band American Head Charge, dies at age 46 after a long illness.

DECEMBER

Numero Group releases *Savage Young Dü*, a box set of some of Hüsker Dü’s earliest recordings. The artfully packaged release is the first in a planned series of remasters and previously unreleased tracks.

Whiskey Junction announces that it will close at the end of 2017. The bar’s owners blame Minneapolis’ recent decision to increase the minimum wage to \$15—though that will not take full effect till 2024.

The Whittier dive bar **Mortimer’s**, under new ownership, begins booking live music. Punk veterans Likehell will headline the first show on December 27, which is also the birthday of late Mort’s doorman Ron Upton.

In its annual “Year in Band Names” feature, the A.V. Club commends three Twin Cities bands for their monikers, including the **Controversial New ‘Skinny Pill.’** “I believe it was City Pages earlier this year that mused aloud whether we would even still be a band by the end of the year, and while we have in no way exploded in popularity since then, we haven’t exploded apart either,” the band’s Skyler Nowinski tells us. “There’s probably some poetry there!” Congrats to TCNSP—and to you, City Pages readers—for surviving 2018. Probably. Unless I have just catastrophically jinxed us all. 

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If you have forged a blood bond with an order of carnivorous brethren and will only ever use the word “vegan” as a punchline, please stop reading. This really isn’t for you.

If you are vegan, or curious about veganism, or even willing to try something different: Welcome. We’re here to talk about J. Selby’s, the plant-based eatery that opened this spring in St. Paul.

But of course, if you’re a vegan, J. Selby’s needs no introduction. You’ve likely been there for dinner, lunch, and weekend brunch. You likely also know by now that this is not vegan fine dining, the gastronomical plant-based plate-art you’ve been not-so-patiently waiting for all this time. This is the American burger without the meat; the classic cheesecake without the cheese; the breakfast sandwich without the eggs. This is vegan food for everybody. And it’s really quite good.

Owner Matt Clayton came into the vegan restaurant business in an indirect and somewhat harrowing fashion. He was a practicing surgeon in the Twin Cities until a brain tumor left him deaf in one ear, which in turn brought on balance issues that forced him to discontinue his practice. After getting an

MBA and trying a stint in health administration, Clayton took a blind leap: He earned his Plant Based Nutrition certificate, and started work on a vegan restaurant concept.

Clayton’s vision came into focus after dining at the vegan restaurant Green New American Vegetarian in Tempe, Arizona. “I walked out saying, ‘This is exactly what we need in the Twin Cities. This is the kind

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BY HANNAH SAYLE



1,400 baskets of cauliflower wings flew out of J. Selby’s kitchen last month.

LUCY HAWTHORNE

of thing that makes plant-based eating acceptable to everyone—whether you’re plant-based or not,” says Clayton.

Back in St. Paul, he walked by the corner storefront on Selby and Victoria and thought it was the perfect place for his vegan-for-everybody concept. So he talked to the owner, and after more than a year of prep, he opened J. Selby’s on April 17.

It closed less than a week later.

Within the first four and a half days, a crush of diners, two to three times as many as Clayton had expected, descended on the fledgling shop and emptied its larders. The staff was shell-shocked.

“We’d prepped all this food that we thought would get us through the first week and we more or less delivered it out

the first day. We had no clue how many people would be coming through the door. We were literally out of food.”

The hiccup, which only temporarily hobbled the business, was a sign of the demand for vegan food in the Twin Cities—and how meagerly the market had risen to meet that demand.

“It was really hard to gauge the demand in advance,” says Clayton. “When I was shopping for financing, I was frequently told by people that they did not believe there was a market for this sort of place, that if the market wanted it, it would already be there.”

When it reopened on May 2, J. Selby’s was a different restaurant, not in terms of its menu or decor, but in nearly all aspects of its operations. Clayton’s team was twice as big and more prepared, its processes more streamlined.

Which is not to say that Clayton opened without planning. For more than a year, he and then-chef Rick Bergdahl fine-tuned the menu.

The preparation shows. J. Selby’s has finessed vegan versions of familiar dishes to entice any kind of diner.

The biggest seller is the cauliflower wings—“We sold 1,400 baskets in November”—followed by the Dirty Secret, a faux Big Mac that combines a patty from local vegan deli Herbivorous Butcher with cheese (as dairy-free cheese is often called), special sauce, pickles, and onion. It’s different—earthier, more substantial than the glide-down-your-gullet fast food original—but delicious.

That’s an accurate review of the entire menu: different but delicious. Plant-based facsimiles of your favorites—biscuits and gravy, cheesecake, nachos—will never taste

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FOOD

exactly the same as the original, of course. But if they tick the same boxes (crunchy and tangy; cool and creamy; spicy and buttery), and if you let yourself relax into something a little different, you might come to see how a diet without meat and cheese can work, regularly or at least occasionally, and still be fun.

Take those biscuits and gravy, for instance. A wonderfully fluffy lump of buttery dough hides under a blanket of truly creamy, truly spicy gravy made with Herbivorous Butcher's breakfast sausage. And in the cheeze cake, best served cold for textural parity, you'll find a rich and crumbly crust topped with a smooth, sweet, custard-like filling and tart raspberry drizzle. Different, but delicious.

The nachos are enormous, piled with soy chorizo, nacho cheeze, vegan sour cream, guacamole, and pico. Wash them down with a beer and see if you aren't satisfied in that way only a giant plate of nachos can satisfy. In a similar vein, the ample portion of street tacos with chorizo (a winning ingredient on this menu), pickled cabbage, and black beans hits the spot, with all the crunch and chew and salt and spice that you want from a taco.

Where J. Selby's struggles is in sourcing, an unforeseen wrinkle that Clayton admits can get in the way of a consistent menu. (It's a struggle made more difficult by the fact that J. Selby's is also one of the few kosher restaurants in the city.) Even as we speak, an employee pops down to ask Clayton if there are any more Herbivorous Butcher hamburger patties left. There aren't.

"Having Kale and Aubry from the Herbivorous Butcher in town is awesome," Clayton says. "The only difficulty we have is that they're a craft shop, they're not mass producing."

Sourcing is also one of the reasons Clayton says he earnestly wishes there were more competition in the Twin Cities. Companies make vegan products in food service sizes, but J. Selby's can't get them because they're the only ones in the region requesting them.

All the same, this sleek, bright eatery is plugging along healthily. And speaking of healthily! Here we find ourselves at the end of the story, having uttered not one whiff of a lecture about the health, environmental, and animal welfare benefits of a plant-based diet. Instead, we'll note—without comment—that this approach to eating is catching on in a big way. And it makes the future of J. Selby's look promising.

"There's been some talk about a food truck. Maybe next summer," Clayton says. "And when we get to the place where I don't need to be as involved in the day-to-day running of the restaurant here, then I think we'll definitely look at another location." ☐

CITY PAGES

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FOOD & DRINK NEWSLETTER

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RED BULL CRASHED ICE AFTERPARTY
WITH PAPER DIAMOND, SHREDDERS, MIKE 2600
PALACE THEATRE \$25/\$30 DOS / 9PM DOORS / 18+

UP NEXT FIRST AVENUE MAINROOM

DEC 22
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BEY BALL
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OF BEYONCÉ
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DEC 23
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THE KLITUATION
LEXII ALJAI, MARIA ISA, DJ SOPHIA ERIS,
SARAH WHITE, MANCHITA, LADY MIDNIGHT,
MICAMARYJANE, SHANNON BLOWTORCH,
DESTINY ROBERTS, MAYDA, AND MORE

DEC 29
CITY PAGES PRESENTS
SOUL ASYLUM AND HAR MAR SUPERSTAR
WITH BRUISE VIOLET

DEC 30
CITY PAGES PRESENTS
HORSESHOES & HAND GRENADES AND THE BIG WU
WITH THE LAST REVEL, FEEDING LEROY,
THEM COULEE BOYS, CHRIS CASTINO
& ADAM GREUEL

DEC 31
FLIP PHONE PRESENTS
2018: THE PARTY
STARRING RAJA AND RAVEN
(RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE)
WITH JULIA STARR, TYGRA SLARII,
MAGIC DYKE, MUSIC BY DBAZ

JAN 05
89.3 THE CURRENT, RADIO K,
AND GO 94.3 PRESENT
FIRST AVENUE'S BEST NEW BANDS OF 2017
WITH THE BAD MAN, BLAHA,
DWYNNELL ROLAND, EARLY EYES,
LADY LARK, SASS, THOMAS ABBAN
HOSTED BY ANDREA SWENSSON (89.3 THE
CURRENT), SYLVIA JENNINGS (RADIO K),
AND JORDAN ALAMAT (GO RADIO)

JAN 06
PABST BLUE RIBBON AND ZUBAZ PRESENT
WRESTLEPALOOZA XI
WITH OFF WITH THEIR HEADS

JAN 11
THE DEVIL MAKES THREE

JAN 18
PASSION PIT

JAN 26
89.3 THE CURRENT AND TGNP PRESENT
ANDREW BRODER & PEOPLE
2018 RESIDENCY FOR
MUSIC AND ACTION
FT. LOW, FOG, MARIJUANA DEATHSQUADS,
IN // VIA, MIDNITE EXPRESS

JAN 27
DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS
WITH LILLY HIATT

FEB 08
CITIES 97 PRESENTS
ZZ WARD
WITH BLACK PISTOL FIRE,
BILLY RAFFOUL

FEB 11
BLACK REBEL MOTORCYCLE CLUB
WRONG TOUR 2018
WITH NIGHT BEATS

FEB 13
NECK DEEP
WITH SEAWAY, SPEAK LOW IF
YOU SPEAK LOVE, CREEPER

FEB 16
REBELUTION
WITH RAGING Fyah

FEB 17
VALERIE JUNE
WITH BIRDS OF CHICAGO

FEB 22
93X THE PIT PRESENTS
MACHINE HEAD

FEB 24
93X THE PIT PRESENTS
ARCHITECTS
DOOMSDAY TOUR
WITH STICK TO YOUR GUNS,
COUNTERPARTS

MAR 02
TUNE-YARDS
WITH SUDAN ARCHIVES

MAR 07
TY DOLLA \$IGN
DON'T JUDGE ME TOUR

MAR 15
AN EVENING WITH THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

MAR 17
GODSPEED YOU! BLACK EMPEROR
WITH KGD

MAR 18
OMD
WITH GGOOLDD

MAR 28
AN EVENING WITH YO LA TENGO

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THE MAGNETIC TOUR

APR 07
TY SEGALL

APR 11
THE WOOD BROTHERS
W/ NICKI BLUHM

APR 13
ECHOSMITH
W/ THE SCORE, JENA ROSE

APR 15
CIGARETTES AFTER SEX

APR 27
FRANZ FERDINAND

MAY 07
PETER HOOK & THE LIGHT
W/ DJ JAKE RUDH (TRANSMISSION)

MAY 09
JIMMY EAT WORLD
INTEGRITY BLUES THE TOUR
W/ THE HOTELIER, MICROWAVE

MAY 10
THE FRATELLIS
W/ BLOOD RED SHOES

UP NEXT 7TH ST ENTRY

WTF
W/ THOMAS ABBAN, LYDIA LIZA
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13

THE SCORE
W/ CASTLECOMER
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14

SO IT GOES REUNION SHOW
W/ BNIX, STEP ROCKETS
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15

ST PAUL SCHOOL OF ROCK
PRESENTS THE MUSIC OF
LED ZEPPELIN AND CBGB
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17 (EARLY)

DRIVIN' N' CRYIN
W/ RICH MATSON AND THE NORTHSTARS
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14

THE HONEYDOGS
W/ SAPPHIRE, THOMAS ABBAN
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15

DEAD HORSES
W/ LEE HENKE
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

6TH ANNUAL MURRAY CHRISTMAS
FT. SHOSHONE GEORGE, AND MORE
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19

BURLAP THE SAC, JUNIOR VARSITY, AND THE NEW ARMADA
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

SOLACE'S 40TH B-DAY BASH
FT. ALL TOMORROW'S PETTY
W/ DARK HORSE, AND MORE
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

MILD MANNER
W/ TELAMONES, STONE ARCH ISLES
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

SPLIT
W/ HANGING FROM THE FLOOR,
CITIES NEVER SLEEP
MONDAY, DECEMBER 18

AUTHOR AND THE PUSH
W/ IRON RANGE
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19

GOOD DOOM, STANLEY, AND DOUBLE GRAVE
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

TRAILER TRASH PRESENTS THE TRASHY LITTLE XMAS SHOW
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23
(FRIDAY SOLD OUT)

F*CK 2017 A ROAST OF 2017
HOSTED BY RANA MAY AND DREW JANDA
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27

HEIRUSPECS 20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY
W/ GABBY Z, DJ MISS BRIT
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29

NIGHT MOVES
W/ LOUD SUN, FRIENDLESS PASSENGER
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30

METALACHI
W/ IMPALER, NIGHTSAUR
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

THE CACTUS BLOSSOMS
RESIDENCY
MONDAY, JANUARY 1

UP NEXT PALACE THEATRE



JAN 24
BØRNS
W/ CHARLOTTE CARDIN, MIKKY EKKO

FEB 09 + 10
PORTUGAL. THE MAN
W/ TWIN PEAKS

FEB 22
GALACTIC WITH LETTUCE

FEB 23
JUDAH & THE LION
GOING TO MARS TOUR
W/ COLONY HOUSE, TALL HEIGHTS

FEB 24
WALK THE MOON
W/ COMPANY OF THIEVES

MAR 02
MIGUEL
W/ SIR, NONCHALANT SAVANT

MAR 17
AN EVENING WITH GLEN HANSARD

APR 03
DAN AUERBACH AND THE EASY EYE
SOUND REVUE FT. ROBERT FINLEY,
SHANNON SHAW
W/ SHANNON AND THE CLAMS

UP NEXT OTHER VENUES

DOROTHY FREEDOM TOUR 2018
FINE LINE
FRIDAY, JANUARY 5

TENNIS
W/ OVERCOATS
FINE LINE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 11

ALEX AIONO FEELS LIKE TOUR 2018
W/ TRINIDAD CARDONA
THE CEDAR
SATURDAY, JANUARY 13

TRIBAL SEEDS ROOTS PARTY
W/ THE GREEN, SAMMY J,
LEILANI WOLFGRAMM
THE CABOOZE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

DESTROYER
W/ MEGA BOG
FINE LINE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

DAVE SIMONETT AND BENSON RAMSEY
ICEHOUSE
THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

RORY SCOVEL IN A PROPER GANDER TOUR
THE CEDAR
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24

MAKO BREATHE TOUR
FINE LINE
SUNDAY, JANUARY 28

JOSH RITTER & THE ROYAL CITY BAND
FITZGERALD THEATER
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31

KIMBRA THE PRIMAL HEART TOUR
W/ KING, ARC IRIS
THE CEDAR
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5

BENJAMIN CLEMENTINE
FINE LINE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

POPPY.COMPUTER TOUR 2018
THE CEDAR
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8

ENTER SHIKARI
W/ SINGLE MOTHERS, MILK TEETH
AMSTERDAM BAR & HALL
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

EMANCIPATOR ENSEMBLE 'BARALKU' TOUR
FINE LINE
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

LOTUS
W/ MARVEL YEARS
FINE LINE
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11

ROSTAM
W/ JOY AGAIN
FINE LINE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

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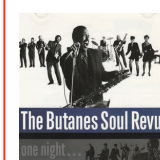
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FRIDAY *Nutcracker* gets raunchy at Cowles **P. 24**

SATURDAY SantaCon parties in Lowertown **P. 25**

SUNDAY Ugly sweaters on cute dogs **P. 27**

WEDNESDAY 12.13

THEATER

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

ORPHEUM THEATRE

The Phantom of the Opera's enduring appeal can be attributed to the familiarity of a sumptuously told narrative, adapted from the novel by Gaston Leroux, centering on the enigmatic title figure's obsessive mentoring of rising star Christine. Famed for its dynamic score by Andrew Lloyd Webber, the musical embraces an extravagance of spectacle, from the lavish recreation of the Paris Opera House to the Phantom's eerie subterranean lair. This touring production boasts of being "bigger and better than ever before," alluding both to the critically lauded scenic design of Paul Brown and to the Tony Award-winning costume design of Maria Björnson. This emphasis on scale can even be seen in a cast and orchestra that numbers 52, making *Phantom* the largest contemporary touring production. Setting aside the work's impressive scope, *Phantom* continues to attract audiences thanks to a paradoxical intimacy, one that resonates with every beat of heartsick longing propelling this doomed romance. Showtimes vary, see hennepintheatretrust.org for the complete schedule. \$39-\$139. 910 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-7007. **Through December 31** —BRAD RICHASON

COMEDY

SEAN PATTON

ACME COMEDY CO.

Sean Patton has been quite the world traveler lately. "I was in Norway, England, and Ireland," he says, "and I did a month at the Edinburgh Comedy Festival." During his time in Europe, he had a chance to perform with local comics. He was especially intrigued by performers for whom English was not a native language. "They've spoken English for maybe five or six years, but they learned to speak it specifically so they could do standup," he says. Some perform in English and their native tongue. The



Drew Peterson slows things down with a screenprinting technique that eschews modern technology.

DREW PETERSON, JUNE/JULY, 2017

latter was sometimes a challenge for Patton if he had to perform on the same bill. "A lot of those comedians would perform in, say, Norwegian, on certain shows," he explains. "The audience is laughing... I don't know what he's talking about or what he's saying. Am I going to go up there and just talk about the same things in a different language? It's very interesting when you break it all down." Back in the U.S., Patton is building and tweaking his next hour, which he hopes to shoot next year. 18+.

8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$18. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday** —P.F. WILSON

BENEFIT/HOLIDAY

THE 11TH ANNUAL STAR WARS HOLIDAY SPECIAL

BRYANT-LAKE BOWL THEATER

As the latest *Star Wars* installment, *The Last Jedi*, hits movie screens, it's evident that Lucasfilm/Disney has crafted a

franchise juggernaut from a carefully calibrated brand identity. Such standards were not always the rule, however, as evidenced by the notorious *Star Wars Holiday Special* (1978). Meant to capitalize on the blockbuster success of the original film, the universally panned TV special combines variety-show oddities with a schlocky space adventure involving reuniting Chewbacca with his Wookiee family for Life Day. Along the way, viewers are subjected to bizarre cameos from the likes of Art Carney, Bea Arthur, and Harvey Korman, along with musical interludes from Jefferson Starship and Diahann Carroll (who coos seductively to Chewbacca's father, Itchy, during a wondrously ill-advised virtual reality "fantasy"). Broadcast just once and never officially released to the general public, the infamous special became the stuff of legend: a fever dream too brazenly atrocious to have been real. Yet here it is, screening at the Bryant-Lake Bowl for the 11th year as a benefit for Toys for Tots. Come endure the embarrassment of the rebel heroes as they take a break from intergalactic warfare to celebrate the holidays. 4, 7, and 10 p.m. Admission is free with a new, unwrapped toy donation. 810 W. Lake St., Minneapolis; 612-825-3737. —BRAD RICHASON

THURSDAY 12.14

BARHOPPING

MEET THE HAMM'S BEAR

SKINNER'S PUB AND EATERY

The Hamm's Bear is a 65-year-old mascot born of an era when it was okay to use cartoons to peddle adults-only products. Though the beer bear is now semi-retired, he is still much loved in Minnesota, showing up on collectibles, in beer- and local-history exhibitions, and even in a six-foot statue paying tribute to him on the Seventh Street Mall. This Thursday, some dude will put on the Hamm's Bear costume and show up at Skinner's. It's not creepy; just roll with it. During the happy hour, folks will be invited to pose with him for pictures, shop for memorabilia, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 ►

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A-LIST

CONTINUED FROM THURSDAY ►

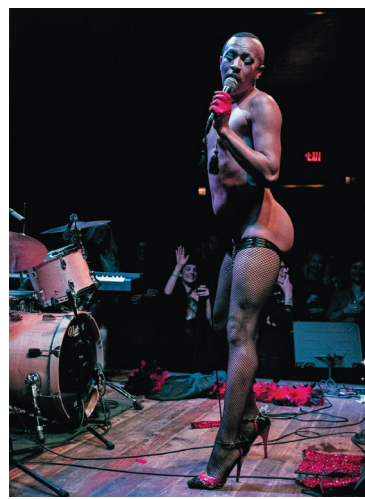
enjoy canned Hamm's for \$1.50 to 7 p.m. Free. 919 Randolph Ave., St. Paul; 651-291-0146. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

COMEDY

PREACHER LAWSON

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY

Comedian Preacher Lawson is probably most widely recognized



KASHI

PERFORMANCE

DADDY

ICEHOUSE

Bust out your leather garb and leave your inhibitions at the door: Daddy, a queer variety show and dance night, is returning to Icehouse for its fifth incarnation. Get your motor running at 10 p.m. with a DJ set, followed by multiple acts from the local burlesque, drag, fashion, literary, and performance-art scenes onstage. Things are capped off with a DJ spinning tunes that will have you dancing your ass off until 2 a.m. Daddy is the brainchild of musician Brent Pennington and cartoonist, sexual health educator, and podcaster Archie Bongiovanni. It's meant to be a sex-positive safe space for the queer community, emphasizing consent and as much sweaty, risqué fun as you can handle. Attendees are known for showing up in outrageous outfits and wild makeup, so don't forget to primp to the hilt. In addition to facilitating mingling among members of the LGBTQ+ community, Daddy raises money for local queer nonprofits like Reclaim, Navigate MN, and Cafe Southside through sales of T-shirts, handkerchiefs, and (of course!) condoms. 21+. 10 p.m. \$10. 2528 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis; 612-276-6523. —ERICA RIVERA

for being a finalist on last season's *America's Got Talent*. While he lost to ventriloquist Darci Lynne Farmer, he still increased his fan base significantly. Having moved over 20 times before he was 10 years old, he quickly figured out that no matter where he wound up in the United States, being funny was the best way to connect with people and make friends. These days he unabashedly likes himself, which is why he has his own picture as his phone's screen saver. A girl he once dated accused him of being conceited. "How am I conceited if I have a picture of me on my phone?" he asks an audience. "That's like walking into a house and saying, 'Man, you've got pictures of you and your family everywhere.'" His popular YouTube channel features shorts highlighting cooking and travel tips. 18+; 21+ later shows. 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; 9:30 p.m. Sunday. \$25.95. 408 E. Broadway, Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Sunday** —P.F. WILSON

FRIDAY 12.15

DANCE

NUTCRACKER (NOT SO) SUITE

THE COWLES CENTER FOR DANCE & THE PERFORMING ARTS

Nutcrackers are a dime a dozen this time of year. This not-so-sweet edition, however, is more naughty than nice, and features drag, cheekiness, and a fab '60s setting. The story follows Maria (Deanna Gooding) as she receives her gift from Mama Flo, a New York socialite played by Bradley Greenwald. In this interpretation, Maria soon enters a dream world filled with urban seediness and posh glamour. It's all led by James Sewell Ballet, with Eve Schulte as Barbie and Jordan Lefton as Ken. Though this annual production is now a tradition, choreographer Myron Johnson promises a performance that isn't cookie-cutter. "This is a show that needs to be different every year," he says. "There are musts, of course—like Barbie and Ken—but part of the thrill of the show is that there are surprises every time we do it." These shows are quirky, but also pretty family-friendly. If you're looking for a little more raunch onstage, be sure to check the schedule for the more adult *Naughty Nutcracker* nights. 7:30 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays, plus Wednesday, December 27; 2 p.m. Sunday, December 17. \$30-\$50. 528 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-206-3636. **Through December 30** —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

ART/GALLERY

IN A GALLERY FAR, FAR AWAY

GAMUT GALLERY

This week, *Star Wars* fans are going to be freaking out over the release of *The Last Jedi*. In between posting on Rotten Tomatoes, writing new fanfic, and watching the *Star Wars Holiday Special* at Bryant-Lake Bowl, consider taking in a bit of culture at Gamut Gallery. Starting on Thursday, the downtown space will be hosting a three-day group show featuring pieces inspired by the sci-fi series. The collection, curated by Mark Dean and Kurtis Johnson, will feature fan-driven art by local talents. That includes Drake Johnson, Tony "Etones"

Larson, Erin Sayer, Leslie Barlow, and Russ White. Come see how these Minnesotans draw inspiration from the 40-year-old franchise. The closing party on Saturday will run from 7 to 11 p.m., and will feature music from Adam Conrad's Improvestra, DJ Andy Fitton, and the Headspace Collective. Come in costume. 1 to 7 p.m. Thursday through Friday; 1 to 11 p.m. Saturday. Free; \$5 closing party. 717 S. 10th St., Minneapolis; 612-367-4327. **Through Saturday —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**



BLAINE GARRETT

SATURDAY 12.16

HOLIDAY

OPEN STREETS HOLIDAZZLE

NICOLLET MALL

For the first time, Open Streets Minneapolis will host an event in winter. During the day, folks will be able to explore Nicollet and Grant Street with the roads closed to motor vehicles. Take a stroll on foot, hop on a bike, or even cross-country ski or pull the kids along via sled if there's snow. Along the route, you'll find sidewalk sales, outdoor sports, live music, and more hosted by businesses in the neighborhood. Step inside for a drink, or pack a thermos with hot cocoa for warmth. The route ends at Loring Park, where Holidazzle will offer an ice rink, a beer garden, traditional food, shopping, and fireworks. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. (fireworks are at 7 p.m.). Free. Nicollet Mall, from Fifth Street South to Grant Street onward to Loring Park in Minneapolis. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

BARHOPPING

LOWERTOWN SANTA CON X

LOWERTOWN ST. PAUL

The best bar crawls don't need T-shirts, wristbands, or entry fees. They only require booze, good cheer, and... booze. SantaCon is the ultimate holiday-themed bar crawl, with hundreds of thousands of people participating in cities all over the world. The Twin Cities SantaCon takes place in Lowertown St. Paul. Now in its 10th year, the event stays true to the spirit

of the season by inviting anyone who loves Christmas, drinking, and causing a festive scene to join the fun. While the name might imply that this is only for the jolly big man, there really isn't a formal dress code. Though you will see Santas of all kinds, you may also spot elves and reindeer throwing back Fireball shots shoulder-to-shoulder with Hanukkah chickens and Kwanzaa hams as half-goat, half-demon Krampus, punisher of bad kids, walks by. So save the money you'd spend on some generic bar crawl ticket, throw on that ugly Christmas sweater you haven't worn since last December, and come take back the streets of St. Paul with the yuletide mob scene of the year. The itinerary tonight includes stops at Big River Pizza, Kelly's Depot Bar, and Biergarten Germania. You can also follow the shenanigans live via Twitter at @santacon55101, and visit lowertownsantacon.info for more info. 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. Free. —PATRICK STRAIT

ART/GALLERY

HURRY UP AND WAIT

PUBLIC FUNCTIONARY

Artist Drew Peterson slows it way down with his new series of prints. For "Hurry Up and Wait" at Public Functionary, he skips the high-tech processes used in modern printmaking, choosing to work instead almost entirely by hand. Scrapping 21st-century tools, Peterson makes mammoth-sized pieces using a technique that combines screen

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 ►

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STEVEN LANG

CONTINUED FROM SATURDAY ►

printing and watercolor painting. In an era where consumer culture is constantly telling us we have to be faster, more productive, more connected, Peterson's off-grid approach is intriguing. These works are filled with a complexity of color, stormy angles, and an undercurrent of emotional expression that is flooring. By embracing the labor that goes into making art, Peterson proves that the tortoise does indeed win the race sometimes. There will be an opening reception from 7 p.m. to midnight Saturday, December 16. 1400 12th Ave. NE, Minneapolis. **Through January 13, 2018** —SHEILA REGAN

SUNDAY 12.17

BARHOPPING

UGLY SWEATER PARTY FOR DOGS

EXCELSIOR BREWING COMPANY

It was really only a matter of time before dogs got involved in the ugly holiday sweater fad. This weekend, you can put your dog into the most festive sweater he or she has (or buy one at the event for \$10) and head out to the most adorable holiday party of the season. No Dog Left Behind is teaming up with Excelsior Brewing Company and Chuck & Don's for an epic afternoon rager that will include a contest with prizes for the ugliest dog sweaters, human sweaters, and the always necessary dog-and-human group costume. Aside from raising funds for the Brooklyn Center-based dog rescue, you'll also be able to score free samples and coupons, and get a fun family photo of you and your dog courtesy of Dog Pet Photography.

Best of all, unlike most ugly sweater parties, if your date pukes it doesn't mean the evening has to end. 2 to 5 p.m. Free. 421 Third St., Excelsior; 952-474-7837. —PATRICK STRAIT

TUESDAY 12.19

ART

ENERGY: MADE HERE

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Hennepin Theatre Trust's Made Here series is back, this time highlighting the work of more than 30 artists who have all created pieces around the theme of energy. They'll fill 20 storefront windows in downtown Minneapolis, as well as two large-scale photography exhibits outside of the Mayo Clinic Square. For "Legendary," Tom Baker, Hannah Foslien, and Maya Washington created portraits of "Purple People Eaters" Carl Eller, Alan Page, and Gene Washington (the nickname refers to the 1970s Vikings defense). The second show, "Urban Mandala" by Neal Peterson, features two large collages made up of photos taken around Minneapolis. Other projects include underwater artistry by the Illuminated Reef Collective, pieces by Sarah White and Marissa Murdy highlighting the work of Global Rights for Women, and showcases by artists Bianca Pettis, Galen Higgins, Akiko Ostolund, and Tana Hargest. For the launch event, visitors can take a walking tour of all the window displays and public-art projects. A reception at Mercy Bar and Dining (Le Méridien Chambers, 901 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis) will run from 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, December 19. RSVP at hennepintheatrettrust.org, or find a map of installations at madeheremn.org. Free; RSVP is suggested. **Through March 21, 2018** —SHEILA REGAN

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AN OLD HOPE

Mark Hamill steals the show in *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*



Mark Hamill

COURTESY OF WALT DISNEY STUDIOS

BY TONY LIBERA

The return of *Star Wars* may have been the most hyped movie event in years, but let's face it: Episodes one through three set the bar extremely low. From Hayden Christensen's acting to Jar Jar Binks' existence, those movies were categorically awful. While the seventh installment, *The Force Awakens*, wasn't a terrible movie by any means—more so a mediocre rehashing of the plot of *A New Hope*—it probably got more credit than it deserved for its vast improvement over predecessors.

Yet, *The Force Awakens* laid a solid foundation for the latest installment, *The Last Jedi*, and with Rian Johnson taking the helm, this picture shows marked improvement.

Johnson's previous film credits are relatively few for a director tapped to head the biggest franchise ever, but he has made a name for himself playing with genre conventions. *Brick* was a high school noir. *Looper* explored uncharted time travel territory. While here he's constrained a bit by the Disney mantle, he is given some room to play. We haven't been surprised by a *Star Wars* movie since the iconic "I am your father" line in *The Empire Strikes Back*, but Johnson aims to subvert, so for the first

time in years we second guess ourselves.

The Last Jedi picks up shortly after *The Force Awakens*, though it's not quite linear. Finn (John Boyega) is receiving medical treatment. Poe Dameron (Oscar Isaac) is leading an attack on First Order ships with trademark devil-may-care attitude. And Rey (Daisy Ridley) is where we left her, a moment away from meeting Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill). She wants to learn from the fabled Jedi master and bring him back to the good fight. But Luke wants no part of her war and immediately tosses away the lightsaber Daisy had been carrying for him.

Things are immediately more interesting than in the last movie. Mark Hamill has developed as an actor since 1977, and he proves his range as a man conflicted by his past, rather than a somewhat one-dimensional Joseph Campbell hero. This isn't your goodie two-shoes Tatooine whiner—as the plot unfolds and we chip away the mystery of what exactly happened between him and Kylo Ren (Adam Driver), Luke gets the nuance he's always deserved.

The broader issue for *Star Wars* is still that of stakes. While Johnson, as mentioned, was able to toy with rules to some extent, we still have a fairly traditional narrative. The story jumps back and forth, perhaps to its detriment, because every close shave

STAR WARS: THE LAST JEDI

directed by Rian Johnson
starts Friday, area theaters

feels progressively more clichéd. *The Last Jedi* clocks in at 2:30, but the timeline-hopping and multiple false endings make it feel much longer.

Star Wars diehards will surely love that, because it means more time for insane space dogfights. And to Johnson's credit, it's a lot of story to pack into one movie. Incredibly, he's found untapped ideas in a setting we've seen seven times before.

The second movie in this trilogy may not pack the gravity of *Empire*, but it's distinguishing itself as a big step up. The progress here—and its loose ends—leads us to believe that the ninth episode will be the best of the current bunch.

And Disney seems happy: Rian Johnson is getting his own side *Star Wars* trilogy, which is really what the franchise needs. What made *Rogue One* so enjoyable is that it wasn't limited by the grander story arc. You could kill people off on a *Game of Thrones*-esque whim. Besides, such an expansive universe deserves to be explored beyond one bloodline. A blank slate for somebody as talented as Johnson is cause for excitement. **C**



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THE SUNNY SIDE

Annie is a delightful ray of light this winter



RICH RYAN

BY JAY GABLER

You may have forgotten that *Annie* is a Christmas show, but you'll certainly remember by the time those plucky orphans are throwing their heads back and singing their hearts out like a caffeinated *Peanuts* gang.

The seasonal setting isn't anywhere so mundane as Whoville or Santa's workshop: It's a distant world where a Republican billionaire pressures a Democratic president to push a massive government initiative that will create economic security for millions—and never once does anyone use the word “entitlements.”

That billionaire is Daddy Warbucks, played with gruff glee by Lance Roberts in the Ordway's big-hearted new production of the 1977 musical inspired by Harold Gray's Depression-era comic strip. Roberts' Warbucks is just as rambunctious as Carly Gendell's Annie, and the pair have an affectionate, playful rapport.

This isn't the kind of show where the stars get to have all the fun, though, and director Austene Van fills her stage with exuberant performances that almost dare you not to smile. Van's orphans positively glory in their musical hijinks, with vivid personality and sure comic timing.

The songs by Charles Strouse and Martin Charnin are so good that it's hard to totally screw this show up, and in a strong production like this one, they're rocket fuel. Credit choreographer Lewis E. Whitlock III with fun vintage-flavored dances that the cast exult in, with a contagious enthusiasm that seems completely genuine.

ANNIE

Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
345 Washington St., St. Paul
651-224-4222; through December 31

Playwright Thomas Meehan created a trio of villains you love to hate, and Van struck gold with her casting of Michele Ragusa as Miss Hannigan, with Britton Smith as Rooster and Cat Brindisi as Lily St. Regis. When they dance together in “Easy Street,” they're as thick as thieves and slyly sensual. Ragusa nails her show-stopper “Little Girls,” while Van ensures the scene belongs as much to the young tormenters as it does to Hannigan.

The set, based on Ming Cho Lee's original design, whisks the action rapidly back and forth across New York City, with a quick trip to Washington and a climactic confrontation on Warbucks' grand staircase. Don Darnutzer's lighting helps corral our attention in the busy tableaux, and aside from a little wobbly brass, musical director Jeff Rizzo keeps a sure hand in the orchestra pit.

The story essentially asks us to believe that one little girl's optimistic spirit pulled an entire country out of a rut. As America's sweetheart, Gendell is a ray of unremitting sunshine, confident but not saccharine. The real star of this spectacularly entertaining production, though, is its director. Best-known as an actor, Van works wonders with this classic musical on the Ordway's starry stage, channeling a palpable sense of joy. This *Annie* has a special spring in its step, making it a standout celebration of pure razzle-dazzle. **A**

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RED HOT | AM MPLS brought out some sizzling looks on December 7. **BY ELLEN LAWSON**



BRIS CARBAJAL

24, GARMENT DESIGNER

What are you wearing?

Recycled polyester hat from Target, Wilson's leather jacket, stripe dress by me from my label Yessenya, thrifted faux croc boots.

Describe your style:

Modern mod, bold, colorful, comfortable.

Your favorite place to go for last-minute gifts?

Holiday pop-ups and Target.

Best places in Minneapolis to spot good style?

You will always run into good style during music, art, and fashion events.



JAZMYNE MCGILL

22, STUDENT, GLAM DOLL

What are you wearing?

Forever21 beret and jeans, turtleneck from Ragstock, white Docs.

Describe your style:

Sometimes it's very Malcolm X vibes, sometimes it's very risqué, but it's whatever I wanna wear and feel confident in, every day.

Best places in Minneapolis to spot good style?

Any Culture Piece event is where I go for inspiration and to spot the best looks Minneapolis has to offer.



JOJO BELL

32, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN INTERPRETIVE CENTER OF MINNESOTA

What are you wearing?

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Describe your style:

Comfy with a splash of Erykah Badu's style.

Your favorite place to go for last-minute gifts?

Local museum gift shops.

Best places in Minneapolis to spot good style?

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MUSIC CRITICS' PICKS

DARLENE LOVE

ORDWAY CENTER, FRIDAY 12.15

There's Bing Crosby and "White Christmas," and Mel Tormé roasting chestnuts in "The Christmas Song," maybe even Springsteen's "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town." But if any one singer owns Christmas with any one song these days it's Darlene Love skating into "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)." Juggling pathos and deck-the-halls exuberance, the tune originated on Phil Spector's girl-group-fueled '63 Christmas album, then Love reprised it annually for nearly 30 years on *Letterman*. That and the other Christmas baubles she sang on the Spector disc—"White Christmas," "Marshmallow World," "Winter Wonderland"—will be on tap as Love brings her holiday extravaganza back to the Ordway. So will other hits she sang with the Crystals, such as "He's a Rebel," and maybe something from her 2015 Steve Van Zandt-produced album. 7:30 p.m. \$47-\$111.50. 345 Washington St., St. Paul; 651-224-4222. —RICK MASON

TEAGUE ALEX & ERIK BERRY

DAKOTA, FRIDAY 12.15

Mandolinist Erik Berry is a longtime member of the renegade bluegrass band Trampled by Turtles. Guitarist, singer, and songwriter Teague Alexy and his brother Ian are Jersey shore expats and the principals of the Americana outfit Hobo Brothers of Uncle Frank. Both stalwarts of the Duluth music scene, Alexy and Berry roll in from Up North to celebrate the release of their new album, *Irish American*, which includes contributions from Ian, Turtles' fiddler Ryan Young, Nicholas David, and Jillian Rae. With spirited picking and energetic singalong choruses supporting appropriately weathered lead vocals, the repertoire is nine traditional Irish tunes plus a couple of originals: Alexy's title track, which suggests an outbreak from *Workingman's Dead* while telling his own family's immigration tale, and Berry's sprightly jig "Miss K's Fancy." 7 p.m. \$15-\$25. 1010 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis; 612-332-5299. —RICK MASON

DRU HILL

THE POURHOUSE, FRIDAY 12.15

Dru Hill's return to Minnesota is ostensibly a 20th anniversary show, even though their first album came out in 1996—better late than never. That self-titled debut established the group members as some of the best pure singers in '90s R&B, with skills and chemistry they'd developed by performing for customers while working at a Baltimore fudgery. After a run of hits, turmoil within the group and solo ventures followed, from Sisqó's first two solo albums (with the first, *Unleash the Dragon*, featuring the deathless novelty hit "Thong Song") to Woody Rock's short-lived time on Kirk Franklin's

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MUSIC CRITICS' PICKS

Gospocentric Records. The group released two albums in the past 15 years, both only moderately successful, then returned last month with their *Christmas in Baltimore* EP. Only loosely holiday-themed, it nearly functions as a full-on new DH record, with the group successfully incorporating Caribbean rhythms and trap-rap drums. With Suga Shane and DJ Dudley D. 21+. 9 p.m. \$40-\$65. 10 Fifth St. S., Minneapolis; 612-843-2555. —MICHAEL MADDEN

BAD BAD HATS

7TH ST. ENTRY, SATURDAY 12.16

Among the most promising Minneapolis indie bands to emerge in the past five years, Bad Bad Hats are in the process of reigniting their initial buzz. In 2013, their breakout EP, *It Hurts*, introduced new fans to singer-guitarist Kerry Alexander's curlicue melodies, lyrics about being in (or out) of love, and jaunty indie-pop instrumentation, rounded out by bassist Noah Boswell and drummer Chris Hoge. Their more varied and confident 2015 debut album, *Psychic Reader*, featuring the stomping anthem "Fight Song," helped the band top City Pages' Picked to Click poll that year and was ranked as the second best Minnesota album in the Star Tribune's Twin Cities Critics Tally. They haven't released so much as a single since then, but this August they announced they'd finished mixing the follow-up. On Saturday, Bad Bad Hats will play a doubleheader at the Entry: an all-ages show starting at 5 p.m. (featuring opening act Idle Empress) to be followed by an 18+ gig at 9 (with support from Jessica Manning). \$15. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —MICHAEL MADDEN

LIL PUMP

FIRST AVENUE, MONDAY 12.18

Lil Pump—one of a handful of insurgent Florida kids who've rocketed up the charts—is a divisive avatar for the direction rap might be heading. The 17-year-old's fast rise owes not just to his music (supremely turned-up and radically repetitious trap-rap), but also his social media presence, particularly on Instagram, where he has more than six million followers. The propulsive and mesmerizing "Gucci Gang" peaked at No. 3, and it's the shortest song to enter the top 10 since 1975. Pump clearly has some growing up to do—his Instagram, for example, is full of miscreant fuckery, including reckless glorification of Xanax and lean abuse. But the clamor of his young fan base—and cosigns from by Southern rap veterans more than twice his age, including Gucci Mane, 2 Chainz, and Rick Ross, who all cameo on Pump's self-titled October mixtape—indicate he's here to stay. With Devon Reason. All ages. 6:30 p.m. Sold out. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —MICHAEL MADDEN

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Train Humper

A hot woman likes groping men on the subway. Is that so wrong?



Dan Savage

I'm an attractive 30-year-old woman. Recently, I was stuck in a packed subway car. I squeezed in next to the best-looking straphanger I could find, faced him like we were slow-dancing, pressed my tits into him, and straddled his leg. We were so close, my head was over his shoulder—I could feel an electrical charge running through his body—and we stayed that way until I got to my stop. Upon parting, I whispered, “You’re very attractive.” And he whispered back, “So are you.” I’ve pulled this on crowded trains a few other times. They’re my favorite erotic memories, and it sure seemed like the guys enjoyed these experiences. But Charlie Rose thought he was “exploring shared feelings.” So I wanted to ask: Am a groper?

TIRESOME REALITY ARROGATES
INTIMATE NEARNESS

Yup.

Some people would say the obvious response would be to ask, “If a dude did this to a woman on a public conveyance, would that be okay?” But a woman seeking out the hottest guy on the subway and pressing her tits into his chest and straddling his leg exists in an entirely different context than a man doing the same to a woman. As I wrote recently on my blog in the Savage Love Letter of the Day: “Men don’t move through their lives deflecting near-constant unwanted sexual attention, we aren’t subjected to epidemic levels of sexual violence, and consequently we don’t live with the daily fear that we could be the victims of sexual violence at any time and in any place.” So a man on the receiving end of your behavior—even a man who felt annoyed, offended, or threatened—is going to experience your actions very differently than a woman subjected to the same actions by a man. A man is unlikely to feel threatened; a woman is unlikely to feel anything else.

While the men you’ve done this to seemed to enjoy it—and we only have your word to go on—that doesn’t make your subway pervery okay. There are definitely men out there, TRAIN, who would be upset and/or angered by your actions. Me, for instance. (I don’t like being hugged by strangers. I

would hate being humped by a random perv on the train.) There are also men out there who have been the victims of sexual violence—far, far fewer men than women, of course, but you can’t tell by looking at a guy whether he’d be traumatized by your opportunistic attentions. Even if your hump-dar (like gaydar, but for humping) was perfect and you never did this to a man who didn’t enjoy it, you’re normalizing sexual assault on subways and buses, TRAIN, thereby making these spaces less safe for women than they already are. Knock it the fuck off.

My fiancé and I are getting straight-married this summer. My fiancé’s best man is in a polyamorous relationship. The issue is that we like only one of his boyfriends. Our best man moved in with the boyfriend we like two years ago. The other boyfriend is new (six months), younger, and immature. Whenever we’ve seen the three of them, his new boyfriend was fighting with one of them. I don’t want our best man to feel like we are being rude in excluding his new partner, but I don’t want there to be drama for our best man at our wedding.

BEING RUDE ISN’T DAT EASY

Hmm. A new addition to a poly relationship who creates drama and makes close friends of the original pair uncomfortable? I’d put the odds of their third being in the picture six months from now at zero. So this is a problem that will most likely solve itself. But you could always ask your friend what he would like you to do. You’re not worried about the new boyfriend ruining your wedding, BRIDE, you’re worried about him ruining the day for your best man. So ask your best man what would be worse—the new boyfriend being excluded (and your best man incurring his wrath at home) or the new boyfriend being included (and your best man having to put up with his bullshit at the wedding). Then +1 or +2 accordingly.

mail@savagelove.net

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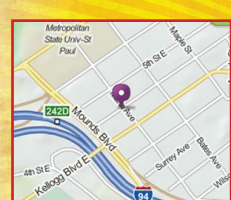
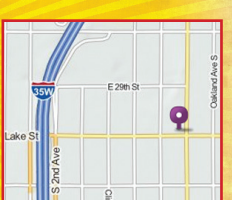
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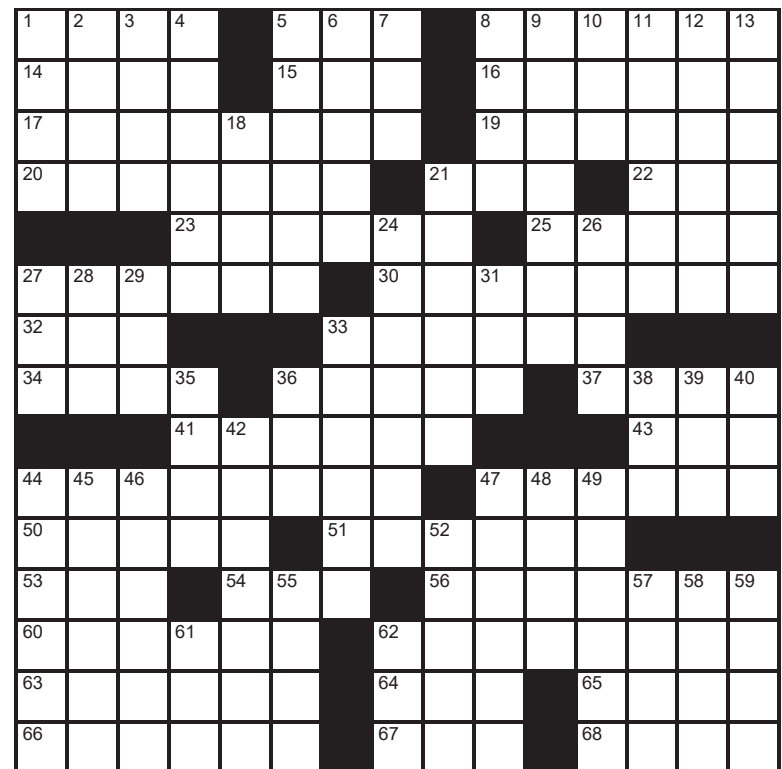
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Across

- 1 [Move your car, idiot!]
- 5 Record Store Day purchases
- 8 Nabokov masterwork
- 14 New Balance rival
- 15 Turn served on a boat
- 16 Common soccer result
- 17 Island off Tanzania
- 19 Sasha and Malia's dad
- 20 Feminist Smeal
- 21 ___ Avian
- 22 Amtrak stop: Abbr.
- 23 ___ magazine (junk mail from the school you went to)
- 25 Simply the best
- 27 Home for the Liszt School of Music
- 30 Armando who created the HBO show "Veep"
- 32 "Tasty!"
- 33 "The Post" star
- 34 Accidental repeat of an entry in a crossword grid
- 36 Snake driver, for short
- 37 Concludes
- 41 Native Kiwis
- 43 Story of my life
- 44 XT5 maker
- 47 Jared Goff's team
- 50 Prince Valiant's bride
- 51 Song whose chorus begins "Talk-in" 'bout / Hey now! / Hey now! / Hey now! / Hey now!"
- 53 Wing in a luxury hotel, maybe
- 54 "Dude!"

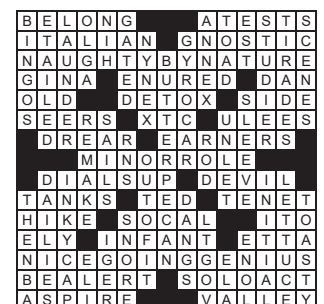
- 56 Shutting down
- 60 Pink fish
- 62 "Ask me later"
- 63 Most unfriendly
- 64 Jameis Winston, briefly
- 65 French 101 verb
- 66 "Secret" figures hidden among the third, sixth, tenth, and thirteenth rows in this puzzle
- 67 The better half
- 68 Chestnut color

Down

- 1 Light smog
- 2 Roundish shape
- 3 Pool ball with a yellow stripe
- 4 Shaq-as-genie movie
- 5 Jeremy Corbyn's party
- 6 ___ tech (scrip filler)
- 7 Title for Mark Rylance
- 8 Earring spot
- 9 Hanging out to dry, say
- 10 Primus guitarist LaLonde
- 11 "Still busy"
- 12 Little breath mint
- 13 Chemical salt
- 18 Visiting Grauman's Chinese Theater, say
- 21 Sparkling headwear
- 24 Go over in excruciating detail
- 26 Accidental repeat of an entry in a crossword grid
- 27 Sanctioned item: Abbr.
- 28 Bird in the Outback
- 29 Little devil

- 31 Bring home
- 33 Overexert
- 35 Give off
- 36 Fifth note in a scale
- 38 Dunking org.
- 39 Lacking light
- 40 "Little help, please!"
- 42 Colorado city on the Rio Grande
- 44 Creme de ___ (liqueur)
- 45 Llama relative
- 46 Give someone a hand?
- 47 Purple flowers
- 48 "Smack That" rapper
- 49 Team list
- 52 Happen
- 55 Six footers at a picnic
- 57 All about right about now
- 58 "Year One" author Roberts
- 59 Spider-Man's girlfriend ___ Stacy
- 61 Came across
- 62 Watson Health developer

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